

PEACE DOLLAR

[Newspaper Clippings], 1921-1922

Americans
January 6, 1921.
People Who Think—FRI

Italian Girl's Head Is Liberty on New Dollar

AN Italian girl was the model for the head of Liberty on the shiny new 1922 silver peace dollar. Anthony de Francisci's inspiration for a new Liberty came to him from the profile of his young wife, Mary Teresa.

For a vivid, youthful face, expressing the spirit of America, Francisci found his best model in his wife. They live in a studio at No. 24 West Sixteenth street. Mrs. Francisci said:

"My husband's idea was to represent Liberty with her face uplifted — staunch, unafraid, with dignity, yet with the freshness of youth.

"In order to get the effect of Liberty's hair blowing in the wind we opened the windows and let the breeze blow on me."



HER FACE ON YOUR DOLLAR—Mary Teresa de Francisci, wife of Anthony Francisci, the artist who designed the head of Liberty for the 1922 peace dollar. She posed for him after he had failed with professional models, and he says he got from her his inspiration which won over eight competitors. 1

ARTIST FINISHING NEW SILVER DOLLAR DESIGN.



Photo by Photogram.

Anthony de Francisci, whose design for new coin issue has been approved by President Harding. He has a studio at 24 West Sixtieth street.

Broken Sword Symbolizes Peace

Sculptor Says American Eagle on Conference Coin Would Never Suggest Defeat.

Criticism of the new silver dollar which will be struck off to commemorate the work of the Washington conference has centered about the fact that the broken sword which is represented on the coin is a symbol of defeat rather than of a triumphant international disarmament.

Anthony de Francisci, the sculptor who won the competition for the design of the coin, explained to-day this seeming inappropriateness by stating that the sword was not meant to appear as broken in defeat but as a symbol of the new peace, in which arms are weapons of honor and not of attack.

"Above the sword, from which the point has been broken in my design," said Mr. de Francisci, "stands the American eagle, and surely the eagle can never be used to represent defeat. In the original design which I conceived I had no sword, but I realized that to celebrate the conference there must be some reference to the discarding of armaments.

"Therefore, in the two designs I submitted, I used in one case a sword, which the eagle bent as he stood upon it, and in the second a sword from which the point had been severed—a sword of defense and not of offense. I believe that the former design was in favor among the judges when they first examined it but later they decided that they preferred the second, and it is from that that the coins will be made."

Coin Bears Olive Branch.

"Also with the sword there is the olive branch of peace, and the combination of the two renders it impossible to conceive of the sword as a symbol-

ization of defeat. It does not seem credible that any one would place such an interpretation on my design, as the Washington conference must be first in the public mind, and America has never suffered defeat."

Mr. de Francisci has figured in a number of exhibitions here as well as having a place in the museum of Cincinnati and several medals in the Numismatic Museum. In the present competition, his design was chosen from among those submitted by more sculptors. He is a member of the National Sculpture Society, the Architectural League, the Numismatic Society and other similar organizations.

Born in Palermo, Sicily, in 1888, he did not come to this country until 1904, but since that time he has studied under the best of the American designers. His first training was obtained in the schools of Rome, and once in this country he took the opportunity offered by Cooper Union to study under Joseph T. B. Water. Next he became the pupil of James A. Fraser, designer of the Buffalo nickel. In the Art Students League. Although for the last seven years he has been working independently, for the six years previous he was the assistant of Adolph A. Weinman, who is the designer of the present dime and 50 cent piece.

Under the present plans, the new silver dollar will come into circulation shortly after the first of the year, with the minting of about 700,000 of these coins.

The Broken Sword.

A new silver dollar, intended to be symbolic of the era of peace, is about to be minted by the Government. This is a good idea, but many Americans must read with regret that the designer, in his effort to picture the idea behind the Washington arms conference, represents the American eagle as standing on a broken sword.

If the artist had sheathed the blade or blunted it there could be no objection. Sheathing is symbolic of peace; the blunted sword implies mercy. But a broken sword carries with it only unpleasant associations.

A sword is broken when its owner has disgraced himself. It is broken when a battle is lost and breaking is the alternative of surrendering. A sword is broken when the man who wears it can no longer render allegiance to his sovereign.

But America has not broken its sword. It has not been cashiered or beaten; it has not lost allegiance to itself. The blade is bright and keen and wholly dependable.

It is regrettable that the artist should have made such an error in symbolism. The sword is emblematic of Justice as well as of Strength. Let not the world be deceived by this new dollar. The American effort to limit armament and to prevent war or at least reduce its horror does not mean that our sword is broken.

Her Head Is Liberty on New Silver Peace Dollar



MRS. MARIA TERESA FRANCISCI.

Mrs. Francisci's husband, Anthony de Francisci, who designed the new silver peace dollar, found in his wife his best model for a vivid, youthful face, expressing the spirit of America. They live in a studio at No. 24 West Sixteenth street.

The Peace Dollar

The United States Mint has put forth a new silver dollar, which is now being distributed to the public. Evidently designed to commemorate the Conference on the Limitation of Armaments, the new coin, which is mechanically admirable, bears on its reverse the word "Peace," and is decorated with a realistic American eagle which, with a singular perversity of symbolism, is shown as standing on the summit of a peak and grasping an olive branch in its talons—thus suggesting that the bird of war (erroneously described in the Associated Press reports of the appearance of the coin as a dove) has feloniously made way with the emblem of peace and borne it triumphantly to its eyrie.

As a product of the numismatic art, nothing can be said in favor of the "peace dollar." It is extremely crude in design and with nothing whatever of the quaint, naive and beautiful crudity of the classic coins. The head of the Goddess of Liberty on the obverse is ill drawn, with a pretty face but with a head of preposterous depth and over-supplied with spikes that radiate like a hetchel from the uncertain brow. One would say that the artist was seeking to draw Medusa rather than our Yankee girl-goddess of liberty. She strangely suggests the over-free "flapper" of Greenwich Village. Her mouth is open, as if in endless prattle—a chatter which "doth tease us out of thought as doth eternity." The obverse carries the motto "In God we trust," in which the word "trust" is spelled with the Roman "V." though on the opposite side of the coin "E Pluribus Unum" is written with the "U." The lettering has at least the merit of extreme plainness.

The eagle on the reverse side of this coin is, as we have suggested, an interesting as well as an amusing study. Its mountain peak is illumined by a sunburst, which, however, suggests a row of bayonets much more distinctly than it does a sunburst. Its mountain top appears rather as a little dirt heap than an imperial summit. It appears to be, doubtless in studied harmony with the pacifistic subject, eminently a tame eagle, in spite of its successful raid on the emblem of the Conference.

We are informed that 180,000,000 of these singular dollars are to be minted and distributed. That is much more than a dollar apiece for every man, woman and child in the country. Perhaps the best that can be said for it is that the peace dollar is worth one hundred cents. It can be purchased for that sum, and will buy just as much of any commodity as the paper dollar will. It is open to the Government to replace the existing dollar with this coin, but it cannot be said to supply any long-felt want, nor does it forward or distinguish the sacred cause of peace or add to the triumphs of American art, which in this field are meagre.

NEW DOLLAR DESIGN STIRS UP CRITICISM

Broken Sword Interpreted by Many Sculptors as Symbol of Defeat.

An editorial in THE NEW YORK HERALD yesterday calling attention to the use of a broken sword to symbolize peace in the design for the new silver dollar to be minted by the Government soon after January 1 has brought out a storm of protest against the design. Many sculptors agreed that the accepted interpretation of a broken sword is defeat, surrender or dishonor. One, however, contended that Anthony de Francisci, who won the competition for the design, had properly symbolized peace and the end of all wars by introducing a sword with its tip severed, above which bends an American eagle.

Gutson Borglum, sculptor, characterized the broken sword as representing the attitude of the United States toward partial disarmament as bad symbolism. "I am in accord with THE NEW YORK HERALD's editorial," he said, "and particularly with that paragraph which states that America has not broken the sword, has not lost allegiance to itself, and the determination and will to protect itself.

"The sword unbroken will always have a place in the symbolism of the United States, for it indicates the punitive spirit, a very necessary spirit, which expresses itself in the court of justice as well as in war. I cannot express too strongly my poor opinion of our coinage. I think we have the worst set of metals issued anywhere in the world. That is regrettable, for it is unnecessary."

Roland Hinton Perry, whose Neptune fountain in front of the Congressional Library at Washington, D. C., and bas reliefs in the ceiling of the same building are among his best known pieces of sculpture in the capital, is of the opinion that only one interpretation can be given to a broken sword, and that is defeat and dishonor. "THE NEW YORK HERALD is quite right in its editorial," said Mr. Perry, "and it seems surprising that a board should accept such a design for a peace coin. A sheathed sword seems the fitting emblem of the cessation of war. If this had been used there would, perhaps, have been no criticism of the sculptor's design."

Leo Lentelli, sculptor, upheld De Francisci in his use of the broken sword. "It means the end of war or it may mean that the eagle is holding the broken sword of the enemy," suggested Mr. Lentelli. "How else can you symbolize the passing of warfare? A sword sheathed may mean that war is still possible, but when you break a thing you destroy its use, and that is what the sculptor has intended to convey to the public in his design. There doesn't seem to me to be any other way to use a sword if you want to express the passing of war and the beginning of peace."

The designer of the coin, Mr. de Francisci, contends that the severed sword is a weapon of defense, not offense. "Above the sword, from which the point has been broken in my design," he explained, "stands the American eagle, and surely the eagle can never be used to represent defeat. Also with the sword there is the olive branch of peace, and the combination of the two renders it impossible to conceive of the sword as a symbolization of defeat. It does not seem credible that any one would place such an interpretation on my design, as the Washington conference must be first in the public mind, and America has never suffered defeat."

A Dollar That Tumbles.

The new silver Peace Dollar is in circulation, and although it does not carry the emblem of the broken sword there is objection to it on grounds less sentimental. The dollar won't pile up. Of course, in a general way, that has been one of the complaints about all dollars since money was invented; but dollars of the past have failed to stack because of the owner's poor luck or lack of thrift. In the case of the Peace Dollar the design itself is to blame. The head of Liberty is in high relief and the edges are not milled.

New Yorkers will not suffer from the change, for silver dollars are pecunia non grata on this part of the earth. Further west there is a passion for cartwheels. It begins in Buffalo in a mild way and increases in ratio clear to the Pacific coast. The West likes a good, hard, clinking dollar. It is sort of emphatic, like the Western hat and the Western, or badger, haircut. So most of the 180,000,000 Peace Dollars will go West, there to be slapped noisily upon the frontier soda water bars and the window ledges of motion picture ticket offices.

The Treasury is already hearing from the banks about the new dollar and its slipping tendencies. It will not hear so directly from enraged Western poker players. A tall stack of silver dollars on a green table is a pretty sight. The new dollar is a blow at strictly cash games in regions where poker and silver dollars are still fashionable.

The New Silver Dollar.

Better Than Its Predecessor, but Not All the Nation Deserves.

TO THE NEW YORK HERALD: Your quick success in causing the erasure of the broken sword from the design of the so-called Peace Dollar saved us a national humiliation, but it was beyond even your power to obtain for us in the new coin an artistic product worthy of the United States. The work is good; when that has been said all that can be said for it has been said. Unfortunately we cannot hail this piece with enthusiasm or point to it with pride.

It is obvious that great annoyance and considerable losses would inevitably result from frequent changes in the coinage, and nobody wants to have new designs put in circulation every few months. It would be worth while, however, to adopt, if ever it is submitted, a design for the silver dollar which shall amplify the might and dignity of the United States regardless of the period which had elapsed since the preceding change.

None of us will regret the passing of the familiar cartwheel, but many will wish its successor were more in keeping with the nation it will serve.

NEW YORK, January 6. COLLECTOR.

The Peace Dollar Askew?

An Observer Finds Its Legends
Are Not Parallel.

TO THE NEW YORK HERALD: Is there some reason, artistic or otherwise, why the eagle and the marking "One Dollar" on the new Peace Dollar are not parallel to the words on the reverse side, "In God We Trust"?

When a pencil is held on the tail side of the coin just above and parallel to the words "One Dollar" and the coin and pencil are turned over vertically without changing their relative positions it will be found that the pencil is not parallel to the inscription "In God We Trust."

Is this condition an error? Is there some purpose in it, or is there a fallacy in my observation?

H. L. AMERMAN,

ROCKVILLE CENTER, JANUARY 7.